

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment in reply to the Office Action mailed November 7, 2005.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend independent claim 13 to further define the claimed invention. The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the subject matter of amended claim 13. No new matter is introduced.

Claims 13-15 and 17-18 are pending in this application. Claim 13 is the sole independent claim.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 13, 15, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,958,265 to Ogahara ("Ogahara"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Ogahara does not disclose the invention as set forth in independent claim 13. For example, independent claim 13 recites a plasma processing apparatus that performs plasma processing on a workpiece placed on an electrode provided inside a processing chamber including, among other aspects, "a thermal conductivity adjusting member, for adjusting a thermal conductivity between the electrode and the electrically conductive ring body, provided between said electrode and said electrically conductive ring body, attached to said electrically conductive ring body; and a means for pressure application for applying a pressure through the thermal conductive adjusting member to raise the thermal conductivity between said electrode and said electrically conductive ring body and is capable of adjusting the level of the pressure." Ogahara does not disclose or suggest any of these aspects either alone or in combination with other aspects of independent claim 13.

Page 2 of the Office Action asserts that main block 3, contact sheet material 4, characteristic correction ring 9, and ring chucking electrode 91 respectively correspond to the electrode, thermal conductivity adjusting member, electrically conductive ring body, and means for pressure application of independent claim 13. Even assuming *arguendo* that this is correct, Ogahara does not disclose "a thermal conductivity adjusting member... attached to said electrically conductive ring body." Indeed, Figs. 1-4 of Ogahara each disclose a gap between contact sheet material 4 and characteristic correction ring 9.

Moreover, ring chucking electrode 91 is an electrically absorptive element embedded in substrate holding plate 2 and disposed adjacent to characteristic correction ring 9. (Col. 8, lines 4-10). Such absorption by ring chucking electrode 91 is implemented without going through contact sheet material 4, which is contrary to the aspect of independent claim 13, which recites "a means for pressure application for applying a pressure through the thermal conductive adjusting member to raise the thermal conductivity between said electrode and said electrically conductive ring body and is capable of adjusting the level of the pressure."

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 102(e) rejection based on Ogahara.

On pages 3-4 of the Office Action, claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogahara in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,919,332 to Koshiishi et al. ("Koshiishi"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection at least because the Office Action has not shown how Koshiishi remedies the aforementioned deficiencies of Ogahara as required to establish a case of *prima facie* obviousness.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103(a) rejection based on Ogahara and Koshiishi.

Applicants further submit that claims 14-15 and 17-18 depend from independent claim 13, and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons that the independent claim is allowable. In addition, each of the dependent claims recite unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited references and therefore each also are separately patentable.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicant does not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicant declines to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In discussing the specification and claims in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicant is in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicant is entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please
charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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